

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 10/9/2002

Print Media Headlines

Oslobodjenje: FOSS Affair – mole in the top of the Federation

Dnevni Avaz: Izetbegovic on FOSS report – Equating us with terrorists will not pass

Jutarnje Novine: NDI poll – Silajdzic keeps trust of voters

Nezavisne Novine: Two nights ago in Kozarac near Prijedor: Policeman wounded; Banja Luka: Nikola Miscevic detained

Blic: Warner Blatter – Demographics never to be same again; Yugoslavia, the champion

Glas Srpski: Two nights ago in Kozarac near Prijedor: Policeman wounded; Banja Luka: Nikola Miscevic detained

Dnevni List: Expelled Drvar Croats denied Croatian documents

Vecernji List: Yugoslav supporters go on rampage in the RS; Deputy Federation Finance Minister protests lottery

RS Issues

During a press conference following his meeting with representatives of the **OHR** and the **World Bank** about electric power distribution and payment of pensions, the RS Prime Minister, **Mladen Ivanic**, said that the RS government had nothing to do with the controversial Srebrenica report. *“Firstly, this report was not officially published, it was presented by the media. The report never passed through official procedure. Just to remind you, the government bureau did present the report at a press conference after one part of the report was published in the media... The RS government will not endorse any report which would constitute its own, definitive view about the events. We know that what happened*

there was a crime...However, the final truth about Srebrenica ought to be presented by historians and experts, not by politicians.” (BHTV 1, FTV, RTRS, Oslobođenje p. 9, Vecernji List p. 2, Blic p. 3, Glas Srpski p. 3)

Both Banja Luka dailies report on yesterday's visit of the PDHR, **Donald Hays**, to Banja Luka and his meeting with RS Prime Minister, **Mladen Ivanic**. While Glas Srpski is focusing on Ivanic's statement related to the Srebrenica report and illegal sale of weapons to Iraq, Nezavisne Novine, carry a lengthy interview with PDHR Hays, in which he spoke about illegal financial transactions, report of the RS Chief Auditor and Srebrenica report. Hays called to all RS institutions to reject the report on Srebrenica, made by the RS Government Bureau for relations with ICTY. (Glas Srpski, p.3, Nezavisne Novine, cover page and p.2)

In the latest edition of **Reporter**, Danijel Kovacevic, sharply criticized the controversial report on Srebrenica, issued by the RS Government's Bureau for Cooperation with the ICTY. *“The truth about Srebrenica should certainly come out, but the whole truth, not Silajdzic's or Izetbegovic's truth, nor the RS Government Bureau's truth...Only with this approach, we shall get to the point where one people will not be blamed for everything that happened, and at the same time Bosniak politicians will not be able to use the victims of Srebrenica as their pre-election slogans.”* Kovacevic notes the report on Srebrenica is a mere political pre-election pamphlet. *“The fact is that the pre-election campaign takes RS politicians to the very bottom, as they would do anything to come to power. However, the problem is that they usually stay in this gutter even after the elections are over”,* concluded the author.

The RS Prime Minister, **Mladen Ivanic**, announced that the RS Government will today discuss the report of the RS Defense Ministry Commission established after the allegations on illegal sale of weapons to Iraq .The RS Defense Ministry forwarded its report to the RS President, **Mirko Sarovic** and RS Prime Minister, **Mladen Ivanic**. Both dailies quote Ivanic as

saying: *"I will inform the international organizations on the results of the investigation. RS and BiH have no reason to violate the UN Resolution. The RS wants to be a part of the modern world and steps to achieve that will be undertaken."* (**Glas Srpski, p3, Nezavisne Novine, p.3, Vecernji list p. 3**).

Nearly all media report that organized groups of supporters of the Yugoslav basketball team went on a rampage after the Yugoslav victory at the World Championship in Indianapolis. According to various reports, incidents took place in nearly all towns and villages in the RS, where a significant number of returnees is residing. Policeman **Predrag Malinic** was wounded in Kozarac, near Prijedor and a numerous windows were smashed in Brcko and Zvornik. 15 business facilities, owned by returnees in Bijeljina were also devastated. **FTV Pogledi** reported last night that some of the hooligans were led by a car of the RS Ministry of Interior during the incidents.

FOSS affair in the Federation

Oslobodjenje (front page) reports that the director of the Federation Intelligence Service [FOSS], **Munir Alibabic**, asked on Monday the Federation Prosecutor and the Ministry of Interior to launch their own investigation of the case of *"seizure and abuse"* of the FOSS secret report about the alleged involvement of a group of former Bosniak officials in various criminal activities. In a statement for the daily, Alibabic said that he expects the possible investigation to reveal the name of the official who leaked confidential information to Ljiljan. Alibabic also asked relevant bodies and institutions to investigate the role of Ljiljan's journalist Mustafa Borovic in the affair.

In a statement for **Dnevni Avaz** (front page), the honorary president of the SDA and the former BiH President, **Alija Izetbegovic**, strongly condemned the FOSS reports, arguing that it *"criminalizes the fight of the Bosniak people."* *"He (Munir Alibabic) labels collection of arms necessary to defend ourselves as smuggling, robbery, crime, and...as Haris Silajdzic correctly pointed out, he equates our fight with terrorism."*

The Sarajevo-based weekly **Ljiljan** sent on Monday a letter to **OHR's Anti-corruption Department** saying that weekly's editorial board members have been exposed to telephone threats and pressure after the magazine published reports that some state officials have been involved in numerous *"affairs with elements of corrupt activities, such as CIPS [Citizens' Identification Protection System], Strom, Telekom and others."* *"In the latest issue of Ljiljan we published a police dossier after which the director of the FOSS, Munir Alibabic, issued a statement ... saying that our journalist Mustafa Borovic should be arrested,"* the board said, asking the AFD to launch an investigation into *"corruption affairs because the current authorities have not done anything in this respect"*. Ljiljan also accused Alibabic, Zlatko Lagumdzija and Senad Avdic, the editor in chief of Slobodna Bosna of trying to *"impose the reign of Stalinist terror in BiH."* (**FENA, Oslobođenje f.p., Dnevni Avaz p. 4, Dnevni List p. 2**)

Dnevni List (page 3 and front page) carries a statement of **Kevin Sullivan**, an OHR Spokesperson, who stated that the question of the alleged involvement of 300 former BiH officials in a serious crime, weapons smuggling, murders, terrorism and other, is an issue for local authorities. *"OHR has no comment because, in principle, it does not comment on the intelligence issues. The report that was given should be addressed by domestic authorities"*, Sullivan said.

Reactions to Kostunica's statement

The weekend's statement by the FRY President, **Vojislav Kostunica**, that he has always regarded the RS as a *"part of the family, very dear to us, which is sometimes temporarily detached , but always in our hearts..."* provoked numerous reactions in the BiH public. BiH Presidency chairman **Beriz Belkic** called the statement *"hypocritical."* *"At all official meetings, Mr. Kostunica claims that he will uphold the sovereignty of BiH, and then, he comes up with similar statements. That is a hypocritical policy, which is*

detrimental to the FRY as is to the RS."

Amer Kapetanovic, the spokesman for the BiH Ministry of Foreign Affairs, noted that the Ministry believes that Kostunica's move is nothing more than the pre-election rhetoric on his part, which has no diplomatic weight. *"There are certain norms of behavior which are binding in line with the international law and which could not be abrogated by any statements."* (**Dnevni Avaz** p. 3)

In an editorial in **Dnevni Avaz**, Fadil Mandal argues that Kostunica's statement clearly demonstrates that the plan of creating the Greater Serbia is well and alive, but that the actors are different.

Refugee Return

Werner Blatter, UNHCR regional coordinator for south-eastern Europe and chief of mission in BiH on Monday released the latest return statistics showing total minority returns recorded in BiH during the first seven months of 2002 had reached 60,245. *"I'm particularly pleased that during the three years mission in BiH, UNHCR recorded some 250,000 minority returns. The return process is still ongoing, indicating an increasing determination of BiH refugees and internally displaced persons to return home,"* Blatter said at a farewell press conference in Sarajevo.

"Despite all the difficulties returnees are facing, the return today is much easier than in 1999. The major problems returnees are facing today remain insufficient financial support for the reconstruction of their destroyed property and the overall economic situation in the country," he added. *"I'm leaving BiH fully confident that the continued political will by the local governments and the appropriate support from the international community, the outstanding problems in the implementation of Annex 7 of the Dayton Accords will be resolved, so that this chapter in BiH's recent history can soon be closed,"* he said. (**FTV Pogledi**, **Oslobodjenje** p. 3, **Blic** f.p., **Vecernji List** p. 2 and **Dnevni List** p. 4)

The High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, met yesterday with the Yugoslav Minister for Minorities, **Rasim Ljajic**, to discuss the issue of refugee return in the region. (**Dnevni Avaz** carries the OHR PR in full, **Dnevni List** p. 4, also one of the top five items in the **Federation Radio, BHTV 1. Oslobodjenje** and **RTRS** report on the meeting between Ljajic and the BIH Minister of Refugees and DPs, **Kresimir Zubak**.)

Dnevni List (page 2) reports that **Gerhard Enver Schroembgens**, a Senior Deputy High Representative, visited Brcko District on Monday for talks with local authorities about the ways of improving the refugee return.

War Crimes

After nearly four years of hearings, the second instance court in Bijelo Polje sentenced Nebojsa Ranisavljevic to 15 years in prison for his involvement in abduction of 19 Bosniak passengers from the train stationed in Strpci in February 1993. Media write that Ranisavljevic participated in that action as a member of a para-military formation of the RS and speculate that the very military top in the RS and Yugoslavia had knowledge about this incident. (**Oslobodjenje** p. 3, very prominently reported by the **Federation Radio, BH Radio 1, BHTV 1, FTV**, one of the last items in **RTRS** prime time news)

Assistant Editor in Chief of **The Washington Times**, Jeffrey T. Kuhner argues that the US should veto the extension of the mandate of the ICTY Chief Prosecutor **Carla Del Ponte**. *"Sadly, The Hague has been a disappointment: The prosecutor's office has engaged in abuses of power and issued flawed indictments that pose a threat to U.S. national interests. .. The tribunal's chief prosecutor, Carla Del Ponte – like most European leftists – is uncomfortable with the notion of moral absolutes. She refuses to acknowledge that Mr. Milosevic in particular, and the Serbs in general, bear the brunt of responsibility for the war crimes committed in the Balkans. Hence, she is looking for an ethnic scapegoat to offset the complaints from Belgrade that her office is demonstrating*

"bias" against the Serbs. Mrs. Del Ponte believes she has found it in the Croats... At the very least, the United States should use its veto at the U.N. Security Council next year to block Mrs. Del Ponte's reappointment. Washington must hold The Hague accountable for its actions. If it doesn't, who will?" (SENSE agency, **Oslobodjenje** p. 3)

Terrorism

At a round table discussion organized yesterday in Tuzla under the patronage of the head of the Islamic Community, **Mustafa ef. Cerić**, and the US Ambassador in BiH, **Clifford Bond**, participants concluded that terrorism should not be associated with any ethnic or religious group, but with individuals. *"Terrorism of Osama bin Laden and Ratko Mladic, regardless of whether it is done under the umbrella of religious rhetoric or not, is the enemy of all civilizations, because the very civilization is based on the idea of pluralism and tolerance,"* concluded the participants. (**Dnevni Avaz**, f.p., **Oslobodjenje** f.p., **FTV Pogledi**)

BiH Presidency members sent an official note to the US President **George W. Bush**, expressing its compassion with the families of all the killed in the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on September 11, 2001. *"It has been a year since the great tragedy which caused revulsion and condemnation of all freedom-loving people in the world, but also the determination of the world's community of peoples and countries to resolutely prevent the expansion of terrorism...In this respect, BiH has been and will continue contributing to this fight..."* (**Oslobodjenje** p. 3, **Dnevni Avaz** p. 2)

Federation

Slobodna Dalmacija (last page) and **Dnevni List** (page 3 and front page) report that the Independent Trade Union of Teachers of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton asked for help from the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**. The letter pertains to teachers in this Canton who work in line with the Bosniak curriculum. *"Responsible ones in the Government, Ministry of*

Education, Culture and Sport of this Canton have not done anything to resolve this difficult situation.' The Union also asked the HR to receive their delegation and hear about their problems.

Vecernji List (front page, by Zdenko Jurilj) accuses the Federation Deputy Minister of Finances, **Sefika Hafizovic**, of illegal protection of "**Lutrija BiH**" (BiH Lottery) company. According to daily's source, Hafizovic last year protested against taxes that "**Lutrija BiH**" is obliged to pay on monthly basis. VL reported that Federation Minister of Finances **Nikola Grabovac** had information that part of money from "**Lutrija BiH**" was going to secret funds and decided to abolish privileged position of "**Lutrija BiH**" of not paying taxes. Deputy Minister Hafizovic stated that such decision would result in 6 million KM loss for "**Lutrija BiH**" company and resigned her membership in the company's Steering Board. Just few days after that, as a revenge, notes the daily, Hafizovic launched story on "**AM Sped**" affair, which resulted in a removal of **Minister Grabovac**. The daily says that after Grabovac's removal and months long obstruction of confirmation of a Croat as the Minister of Finances, the betting shops that are 100 % owned by Croats have been closed.

Pre-election Activities

The latest **opinion poll** in BiH, conducted by the **NDI** last month does not indicate any change in the popularity of parties and candidates at the forthcoming elections. The results show that the strongest support in the election race for **Presidency** members is still enjoyed by candidates **Mirko Sarovic** (SDS), **Haris Silajdzic** (Party for BiH) and **Dragan Covic** (HDZ). In comparison with previous polls, a distinct rise in support has been noted for the candidate of Working for Prosperity, **Mladen Ivankovic Lijanovic** and the candidate of the SDP, **Alija Behmen**.

With regards to the elections for the **BiH Parliament's House of Representatives**, the poll shows a visible rise in support for the **SDP** of two per cent, so that with a total of 12 per cent, the SDP has caught up with the leading **SDS**. The NDI

noted an visible fall in popularity of the SDA and the HDZ in the election run-up for this House.

According to results of the research conducted on 3 September, the six moderate parties, all members of the current **Alliance for Change**, the SDP, the SBiH, Working for Prosperity, the SPU [Party of Pensioners] and the LDS, now have 51 per cent of the vote for seats in the BiH Federation Parliament, while the HDZ and the SDA jointly have 34 per cent. The situation pertaining to the election of deputies in the **RS National Assembly** has also not changed significantly. The SDS still has a slight advantage over (NOTE: The poll was conducted on a sample of 2,400 participants in the period between August 28 and September 3 of this year.) (**ONASA, Croat Radio Herceg-Bosna, BHTV 1**, front page in **Jutarnje Novine, Nezavisne Novine p. 3, Glas Srpski, Dnevni Avaz**)

"I will not allow a single BiH army to be established. In order for this not to happen, we need to work and not to wait for somebody else to do it for us", the SNSD party President, **Milorad Dodik**, stated at the pre-electoral tribune held in Podgraci. (**Blic** p. 3)

The SDS party candidate for BiH Presidency, **Mirko Sarovic**, stated that he would plead for an urgent census in BiH, to avoid the establishment of authorities in line with 1991 census, as envisioned by the constitutional changes. (**Blic, Nacional**)

Slavo Kukic in his editorial in **Dnevni List** (page 4) criticizes all parties from the RS arguing that they are concerned solely about the interests of Serbs, and in particular Presidency member candidate Mirko Sarovic (SDS) who stated that he will work on preservation of dignity of the war of liberation. *"The fact that the war was a 'liberation' one is of course confirmed by Ivanic's experts who are even trying to show the tragedy of Srebrenica as an irony."* Kukic is saying that SDA is launching initiative for BiH to candidate

for full membership in Organization of Islamic Conference. Kukic adds with a doze of irony: *"Just to know where Bosnia belongs to. And to whom."* Kukic also analyses the slogan of HDZ-coalition 'Everything that is valuable we created together', arguing that there is nothing valuable, except 'valuable' *"tens of thousands of killed and invalids (...) exodus of thousands of Croats from Posavina and other parts of BiH (...) or even robbery of their own people so big that such wasn't registered in recent history"*. Kukic, however, warned that one of the parties in coalition with HDZ, in which he (Kukic) was one of the co-founders, the Croat People's Union (HNZ), *"never created anything together with HDZ, neither Croat Republic Herceg-Bosnia, nor Croat Self-Rule, etc (...) Maybe, under 'together' they think of their partners from SDS and SDA. If that is the case then the slogan is serving the truth. For everything that people, both Serb and Bosniak, have gone through in the last decade, gangsters from SDA-SDS-HDZ are taking all the credit"*, Kukic wrote.

Electronic Media Headlines

BHTV 1

- The Deposit Insurance Agency is on the way to revive a trust of BiH money savers into the banking system.
- Ranisavljevic sentenced to 15 years in prison because of seizure of 15 Bosniaks on 1993.
- Dr. Ronald Hercer, a honorary Ph.D at the Sarajevo University
- FRY – a world basketball champion

FTV

- Nebojša Ranisavljević was sentenced to 15 years in prison for the crime committed in Štrpci, when 19 Bosniaks were killed.
- The RS Government will not adopt any report indicating its position on events that happened in Srebrenica during the war.
- Victory of FRY in a basketball play-off caused destruction of the Bosniak returnees' property in many parts of the RS.

RTRS

- The commission investigating alleged weapons sale to Iraq, submits its report tomorrow, says the Prime Minister Ivanić.
- Pensions payment through banks starts today.
- First national Internet provider starts to work.
- Prijedor – police car shot seriously injuring police officer.
- Arafat calls Palestinians parliament to end conflicts with Israel and offered hand over of executive power.